Psikostudia
Jurnal Psikologi
Volume 15 No. 3| September 2026 : 534 - 540
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/psikostudia.v15i1

p-ISSN: 2302-2582
e-ISSN: 2657-0963

Islamic Work Ethics and Organizational Commitment: The Role of Cultural Factors as a Moderator for Early Childhood Education Teachers

Etika Kerja Islam dan Komitmen Organisasi: Peran Faktor Budaya sebagai Moderator Guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini

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Abstract

Islamic work ethics is a set of value systems and beliefs in educators that are sourced from Islamic teachings and underlie the attitudes and behavior of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) teachers in increasing organizational commitment strengthened by cultural factors. The objectives of this study are (1) to determine the influence of Islamic work ethics on organizational commitment (2) to test cultural factors as a moderator of the relationship between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment in PAUD teachers. The subjects in this study were PAUD Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal (ABA) teachers in Gresik Regency, East Java and PAUD ABA teachers in Purwokerto Regency, Central Java using random sampling obtained 172 participants. Data collection instruments used the Islamic Work Ethic Questionnaire, Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, and cultural demographic data. This type of research is quantitative, and in data analysis using PLS-SEM analysis. The results of the study showed that there was a significant influence of Islamic work ethics on organizational commitment with p <0.01, while cultural factors did not moderate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment with p = 0.157. These findings indicate that internalized Islamic values within educators are consistently able to predict organizational commitment, regardless of differences in cultural background.

Keywords : *Cultural Factors, Early Childhood Education Teachers, Islamic Work Ethics, Organizational Commitment.*

Abstrak

Etika kerja Islam menjadi seperangkat sistem nilai dan keyakinan pada pendidik yang bersumber dari ajaran agama Islam serta mendasari sikap dan perilaku guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) dalam meningkatkan komitmen organisasi yang dikuatkan dengan faktor budaya. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah (1) untuk mengetahui pengaruh etika kerja Islam terhadap komitmen organisasi (2) menguji faktor budaya sebagai moderasi antara etika kerja Islam dengan komitmen organisasi pada guru PAUD. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah guru PAUD Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal (ABA) di Kab. Gresik Jawa Timur dan guru PAUD ABA di Kab. Purwokerto Jawa Tengah menggunakan random sampling didapatkan sebanyak 172 parisipan. Instrumen pengumpulan data menggunakan *Islamic Work Ethic Questionnaire, Organizational Commitment Questionnaire*, dan data demografi budaya. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kuantitatif, dan dalam analisis data menggunakan analisis PLS-SEM. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat pengaruh signifikan etika kerja Islam terhadap komitmen organisasi dengan $p < 0.01$, sedangkan faktor budaya tidak memoderasi hubungan etika kerja Islam terhadap komitmen organisasi dengan $p = 0.157$. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa nilai-nilai islam terinternalisasi dalam diri pendidik secara konsisten mampu memprediksi komitmen organisasi, terlepas dari perbedaan latar belakang budaya.

Kata Kunci : Etika Kerja Islam, Faktor Budaya, Guru PAUD, Komitmen Organisasi.

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Received 30/03/2026 | Revised 10/06/2026 | Accepted 07/07/2026

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INTRODUCTION

Teachers can be considered human resources with a crucial role and significant influence on the learning process, as they serve as educators and instructors in the world of education (Larasati & Sawitri, 2020). Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning teaching staff requires teachers to possess skills such as good communication skills, professional competence and qualifications, and good morals. Therefore, commitment and a strong work ethic are essential for their profession, as well as the ability to develop themselves (Puspitarani & Masykur, 2018). One such educational institution is Early Childhood Education under the auspices of Islamic organizations such as Aisyiyah. Teacher commitment is not merely understood as a contractual obligation but also as a manifestation of the internalization of moral and spiritual values. Although early childhood education teachers formally possess religious values, the turnover rate and low commitment among teachers remain unresolved issues.

Teacher commitment is reflected in their behavior in carrying out their main obligations as educators and their participation in school activities, in happy, stressed, or simply fulfilling moral obligations, with the assumption that every teacher has a strong commitment to the school, then any problems that occur at school will not reduce the teacher's enthusiasm to provide the best for students at school (Hidayat, 2017). A teacher's commitment to a school organization can have a big impact by improving the organization's quality, fostering independence, improving teamwork, creating a willingness from within to make changes, and evaluating for future improvements. The existence of educational goals, no matter how good, will be difficult to achieve without strong commitment (Mulyani et al., 2020; Permana & Sriathi, 2016). Current conditions indicate that exposure to Islamic work ethics values in the work environment does not automatically strengthen employees' commitment to remain employed (Falah et al., 2021). Understanding teacher well-being and job satisfaction is also essential in this context, as social support and self-efficacy have been shown to significantly influence job satisfaction among early childhood education teachers, including those in playgroup and kindergarten settings (Hariyanti & Laily, 2020; Hasanah & Laily, 2020), which in turn affects their organizational commitment.

The gap between the internalization of Islamic work ethics and the organizational commitment of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers becomes even more complex when cultural diversity is considered. Indonesia, as an archipelagic nation with over 1,300 ethnic groups, places each educational institution, particularly within a culturally diverse context, even among institutions under the umbrella of the same Islamic organization.

Research conducted (Idrus et al., 2023; Nasution & Rafiki, 2020; Romi et al., 2020; Suryani & Triyono, 2022) (8) found that employees' Islamic work ethics influences organizational commitment, thus Islamic work ethics can act as a predictor of organizational commitment. Work ethic is a key factor influencing employee performance (Idrus et al., 2023). Islamic teachings also emphasize employee professional engagement and collaboration in the workplace (Romi et al., 2020). An Islamic work ethic serves as an orientation that influences and shapes individual participation and engagement in the workplace. This suggests that work is a virtuous endeavor and a necessity for establishing balance in social and individual life (Zafar et al., 2026). The Islamic work ethic encompasses more than just hard work, but also encompasses the meaning of worship. Beyond material gain, it also has a spiritual dimension and a connection to God that Muslims seek to achieve in everything they do (Nasir et al., 2025).

Several previous studies have identified the most striking gap: the lack of studies explicitly examining cultural factors as moderating variables between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment among early childhood education teachers in Indonesia. Previous studies (e.g., Falah et al., 2021; Idrus et al., 2023; Nasir et al., 2025; Nasution & Rafiki, 2020; Romi et al., 2020; Suryani & Triyono, 2022; Zafar et al., 2026) have demonstrated the influence of Islamic work ethics on organizational commitment. However, these studies were conducted in commercial and professional organizations, not early childhood education institutions. Furthermore, none of these studies considered internal cultural variations within a single Islamic organization as a factor that could strengthen or weaken the effect of Islamic work ethics on organizational commitment. This creates a conceptual and empirical void that urgently needs to be addressed.

The urgency of this research rests on at least three mutually reinforcing dimensions. Theoretically, this study fills a gap in the literature by introducing a perspective on cultural moderation, a factor that has never been empirically tested in early childhood education (PAUD) teachers. Practically, the findings of this study will provide guidance for managers of Aisyiyah early childhood education institutions in designing strategies to increase teacher commitment that are sensitive to local cultural contexts, rather than simply relying on a uniform organizational value system. Institutionally, given that Aisyiyah manages thousands of early childhood education institutions spread across various provinces with diverse cultural characteristics, understanding the role of cultural moderation is an important foundation in developing contextual and equitable human resource policies.

The novelty of this research can be emphasized in four aspects. First, this study applies a cultural factors approach. Second, early childhood education (PAUD) teachers represent a population that has not been specifically studied in Islamic work ethics in international or national literature, thus opening new empirical horizons. Third, this study explicitly explores the possibility of the failure of cultural moderating factors, namely, conditions in which cultural factors are unable to strengthen the relationship between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment, or even weaken it. This is a potential finding that has not been discussed in previous literature. Fourth, this study integrates Hofstede's cultural dimensions with the concept of Islamic organizational culture, forming a more contextual, hybrid theoretical framework to explain the

dynamics of values and commitment in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

The cultural theoretical framework used in this study is Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (Hofstede, 1982), operationalized at the community and local organizational levels. Collectivism and power distance are the two most relevant dimensions, given that Indonesian society is generally characterized by a strong collectivist orientation and respect for hierarchy. These differences are predicted to moderate how Islamic work ethics are internalized and translated into organizational commitment behavior.

The two regions chosen as the locus of this research have cultural differences, namely the Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal (ABA) PAUD in Gresik Regency, East Java, and the ABA PAUD teachers in Purwokerto Regency, Central Java, which are urban-industrial areas with more heterogeneous community characteristics, high social mobility, and a more individualistic work orientation due to large-scale migration from various regions. The second region is more homogeneous and has a communal cultural character, and is oriented towards strong local values. Based on the explanation above, this study aims to: (1) analyze the influence of Islamic work ethics on the organizational commitment of PAUD teachers; (2) identify the role of cultural factors as moderators in the relationship between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment; (3) explore the possibility of failure of cultural moderation in one of the regional contexts, which can provide theoretical and practical implications for the development of human resource management in Islamic educational institutions.

RESEARCH METHOD

Reserach Design

This study uses a quantitative research design. The aim of using a quantitative design is to determine whether the Islamic work ethic can predict an increase in organizational commitment among PAUD teachers, with cultural factors as a moderator.

Participan

Participants in this study were ABA PAUD teachers in Gresik Regency, East Java, and Purwokerto Regency, Central Java. The number of participants was 172 teachers, consisting of 94 ABA PAUD teachers in Gresik Regency and 78 teachers in Purwokerto Regency. The determination of participants was based on random sampling, namely probability sampling, in which everyone in the target population has an equal chance of being selected. The data collection process used a list of teacher names, and then the researcher randomized. For selected participants, the researcher then gave a scale to the participants.

Measurement instrument

The data collection instruments used were the Islamic work ethics scale, the organizational commitment scale, and cultural demographic data. The Islamic Work Ethics Scale was constructed based on the Islamic Work Ethics Questionnaire instrument developed by Miller et al. (2002), based on the concept of Islamic work ethics, consisting of four aspects: effort (IWE1), competition (IWE2), transparency (IWE3), and moral responsibility (IWE4). The Islamic work ethics scale consisted of 17 items. The organizational commitment scale was constructed based on the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) instrument developed by Allen & Meyer (1990). This scale was designed based on three dimensions of organizational commitment: affective commitment (OC1), continuance commitment (OC2), and normative commitment (OC3). The cultural demographic data consisted of origins from Purwokerto and Gresik.

Data Analys

Data analysis was used to identify an Islamic work ethic model to predict increased organizational commitment (divided into three components: affective, continuance, and normative) among early childhood education (PAUD) teachers, with cultural factors as a moderator. SmartPLS software was used in this study. This study has a complex model; therefore, SmartPLS software was used in data analysis. PLS is a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) model with a variance-based or component-based structural equation modeling approach. According to Hair & Alamer (2022), the purpose of PLS-SEM is to develop a theory or construct a predictive orientation.

RESEARCH RESULT

Measurement model evaluation. The criteria for testing the suitability of the SEM model were evaluated by comparing Hair et al. (2022) with the criteria for evaluating a reflective measurement model, which include factor loadings ≥ 0.700, composite reliability ≥ 0.70, average variance extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50), and discriminant validity using the HTMT, Fornell, and Lacker criteria ≥ 0.400. The results are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Loading Factor, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted Measurement Model

construct	Indicator	λ	*AVE*	CR	α
IWE	IWE1	0.861	0.657	0.865	0.829
	IWE2	0.794			
	IWE3	0.806			
	IWE4	0.799			
OC	OC1	0.868	0.573	0.728	0.736
	OC2	0.736			
	OC3	0.823			
Cultural Factoral	C	1.000			

Validity testing shows that the indicator's factor loading meets the minimum requirement of 0.70. The analysis results show that all constructs have factor loadings≥ 0.70. The reliability test results, based on the table above, indicate that the AVE ranges from 0.573 to 0.657, the CR

ranges from 0.728 to 0.865, and the Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0.736 to 0.829.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity HTMT

	HTMT
Islamic Work Ethics <-> Cultural Factor	0.101
Organizational Commitment <-> Cultural Factor	0.295
Organizational Commitment <-> Islamic work ethics	0.582

From the above analysis, it was found that the HTMT value for each pair was less than 0.90, the discriminant validity evaluation was met. To strengthen the results of the discriminant validity analysis, the researchers conducted an analysis. The structural model evaluation was conducted by checking for multicollinearity among variables using the Inner VIF measure. An Inner VIF value below 5 indicates no multicollinearity between variables (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 3. Multicolinierity

Variabel	VIF
Cultural Factor -> Organizational Commitment	1.003
Cultural Factor x Islamic work ethics -> Organizational Commitment	1.004
Islamic Work Ethics -> Organizational Commitment	1.005

The analysis results show that the inner VIF is <5, indicating low multicollinearity among variables. This result confirms the robustness of the parameter estimation results in SEM PLS, particularly in the mediator analysis (unbiased). The SRMR of 0.092 indicates an acceptable fit. Meanwhile, the NFI = 0.906, its value is above 0.90, indicating that this research model has a fit level of 90.6%.

Table 4. Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	β	*p*-value	95% CI		F^2
			CI Lower	CI Upper	
H1. IWE → OC	0.463	< 0.001	0.360	0.565	0.275
H2. CF x IWE- → OC	-0.087	0.154	-0.087	-0.204	0.010

Note. Islamic work ethics (IWE); Organizational Commitment (OC); Cultural Factor (CF)

Based on the analysis that has been done, it was found that (H1) was accepted, namely, Islamic work ethics can directly predict organizational commitment, as evidenced by the p-value <0.001 (β = 0.741). The contribution of Islamic work ethics to organizational commitment is categorized as moderate (f2 = 0.275). Meanwhile, H2 was rejected: cultural factors do not play a moderating role between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment, with p> 0.001 (p = 0.154; β = -0.087).

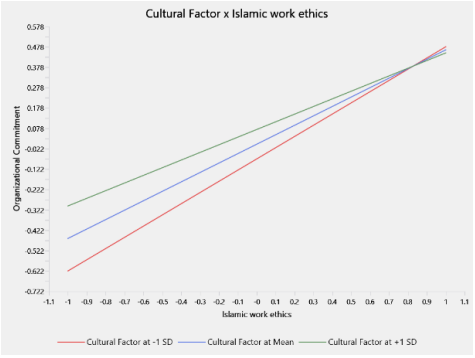


Figure 1. Simple Slope Results

The simple slope graph shows that all lines are positive. This means that at all levels of cultural factors (low, medium, and high), an increase in Islamic work ethics is still accompanied by an increase in organizational commitment. The difference in slope between the lines is not strong enough to indicate a moderating effect. In other words, cultural factors do not significantly alter the relationship between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment.

These results indicate that Islamic work ethics have a relatively consistent influence on organizational commitment, regardless of the level of cultural factors. Early childhood education teachers with a strong Islamic work ethic tend to maintain high organizational commitment, regardless of whether they work in a low- or high-cultural environment. Therefore, cultural factors in this study serve more as a supporting context, rather than as variables that strengthen or weaken the relationship between the two variables.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that Islamic work ethics have a significant influence on the organizational commitment of ABA PAUD teachers in Gresik and Purwokerto Regencies. This finding strongly supports Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposed in this study and confirms that Islamic values at work play a substantive role in shaping an individual's attachment to their organization.

This finding aligns with previous research that found Islamic work ethics to be able to predict organizational commitment (Blanco-Encomienda & Al Jasimee, 2026; Hawwa et al., 2026; Nasir et al., 2025). Teachers who internalize Islamic work ethic values tend to demonstrate higher loyalty and dedication to their institutions (Falah et al., 2021; Hidayat, 2017; Puspitarani & Masykur, 2018).

The predictive power of Islamic work ethics on organizational commitment in this study is categorized as moderate, indicating that this variable is a relevant but not the sole predictor of organizational commitment. This value is consistent with findings (Ali, 1992; Gorfie, 2026; Panayiotou & Efstathiades, 2026; Tacong et al., 2026; Wu et al., 2026) which state that Islamic work ethics is an important antecedent of organizational commitment, although other variables such as transformational leadership, organizational climate, and job satisfaction also contribute.

Theoretically, this relationship can be explained through the perspective of Islamic values that emphasize amanah (responsibility), itqan (perfection in work), and niyyah (sincere intention). When these values are internalized by a teacher, they may view work not merely as a contractual obligation but as an act of worship that demands consistency and full dedication. This directly strengthens the dimensions of organizational commitment, particularly affective and normative commitment, as conceptualized by Allen and Meyer (1990).

These findings also enrich the literature on early childhood education (PAUD), which has rarely been explored from the perspective of religion-based work ethics. PAUD teachers with a strong Islamic work ethic are not only emotionally attached to the institution but also feel a moral obligation to persist and contribute their best, a pattern that reflects the normative commitment within Allen and Meyer's (1990) theoretical framework.

In contrast to H1, Hypothesis 2, which stated that cultural factors, operationalized through differences in regional origin between Gresik Regency (East Java) and Purwokerto Regency (Central Java), act as moderators in the relationship between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment, was not supported by the empirical data in this study. This finding broadens the discussion on the limits of local cultural influence on Islamic value-based organizations.

This failure to moderate can be understood through several interrelated psychological and contextual mechanisms. First, the shared religious identity of the two groups of participants, both PAUD teachers from Aisyiyah Bustanul Athfal (ABA), an educational institution affiliated with the Islamic organization Muhammadiyah, likely created value homogeneity that transcends regional cultural differences. From the perspective of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), affiliation with Islamic identity and the Muhammadiyah organization may be more dominant in shaping teachers' work orientations than cultural differences between East Java and Central Java.

Second, this failure of moderation can also be interpreted within the framework of value universalism. Ali (1992) argued that Islamic work ethics are transcendent and transcend local cultural boundaries, as they are rooted in the values of the Qur'an and Hadith, which are universally applicable to all Muslims. Once these values have been firmly internalized, regional cultural differences no longer have the capacity to alter the strength of the relationship between work ethic and commitment. This finding aligns with prior findings that Islamic work ethics tend to produce relatively consistent effects across various Muslim cultural contexts (Hawwa et al., 2026; Zafar et al., 2026).

It should be noted that both Gresik and Purwokerto are predominantly Muslim and have strong Islamic traditions. Unlike cross-cultural studies that compare Muslim and non-Muslim contexts or that sharply contrast collectivist and individualistic cultures, the differences between the two regions in this study are more gradual and not sufficiently contrasting to produce a statistically significant moderating effect.

The results of the simple slope analysis further support this interpretation. All lines in the simple slope graph show a positive trend at all levels of cultural factors (low, medium, and high), with relatively parallel slopes. This pattern reflects the consistency of the relationship between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment, regardless of the level of cultural factors a pattern known in moderation analysis terminology as an additive, rather than an interactive, relationship.

A limitation of this study is that participants were limited to ABA PAUD teachers in two districts under the auspices of one organization (Muhammadiyah). Therefore, the homogeneity of organizational values could act as a confounding variable that mitigates the effects of regional cultural differences. This limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of early childhood education (PAUD) teachers, particularly those affiliated with non-Islamic or heterogeneous educational institutions. On the other hand, this study has several noteworthy strengths. The comparative design across two regions provides contextual variation that enriches the interpretation of the results. The use of moderation analysis with bootstrapping techniques within the PLS-SEM framework provides more robust estimates than conventional regression approaches, especially when data distributions do not always meet the assumption of normality. Furthermore, the focus on the context of Islamic-based PAUD is an original contribution, filling a gap in the literature that has been dominated by research on the corporate sector.

Theoretically, this study provides empirical confirmation of the relevance of the Islamic work ethic as a valid psychological construct in the context of Muslim educators in Indonesia. These findings strengthen the argument that religiously based values are a source of motivation and work engagement that cannot be ignored in contemporary organizational theory, particularly in countries with large Muslim populations.

Furthermore, the failure of cultural factors to moderate this study provides an important theoretical contribution, identifying the limits of local cultural influence when religious identity and organizational affiliation serve as a more dominant value glue. These findings encourage researchers to be more careful in defining and measuring 'cultural factors' in moderation studies, and to consider whether existing cultural differences are sufficiently contrasting to produce meaningful moderating effects.

CONCLUSION

Islamic work ethics have been shown to be conceptually relevant as a predictor of organizational commitment in early childhood education (PAUD) teachers, while cultural factors are unable to moderate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and organizational commitment. This study recommends the development of a more contextual measurement instrument for cultural factors in Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Further research should consider exploring possible moderator variables that may operate between Islamic work

ethics and organizational commitment, such as job satisfaction, perceptions of organizational justice, and organizational support. Aisyiyah leaders at the regional and local levels need to design programs to strengthen Islamic work ethics that are not uniform but tailored to local cultural profiles.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to all Early Childhood Education (PAUD) teachers who voluntarily participated in this research. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the PAUD administrators and principals who granted permission and facilitated the data collection process. We also extend our gratitude to our colleagues at Muhammadiyah University of Gresik and Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto who provided support, input, and suggestions throughout the research process.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee. All participants were provided with an explanation of the purpose of the study, the procedures to be performed, the voluntary nature of participation, and the right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to participation in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participant data were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not represent the official position of their respective institutions.

TRANSPARENCY OF DATA

Data supporting the findings of this study are available upon reasonable request to the corresponding author, Nadhirotul Laily (nadhirotul.laily@umg.ac.id), subject to institutional and ethical constraints intended to protect participant confidentiality. The measurement instruments used in this study, including the Islamic Work Ethic and Organizational Commitment scales, are also available upon request for scholarly research purposes.

FUNDING

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Nadhirotul Laily: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Collection, Writing Original Draft and Supervision, Corresponding Author.
Retno Dwiyanti: Methodology, Data Analysis, Writing, Review & Editing.

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